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## RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

### AUTHORITY AND FAITH IN RELIGION

The admirable book here under review<sup>1</sup> is admirably translated, and puts into reachable form the positions that in the theological mind separate the old from the new. To the modern student of theology it will be a most attractive, though somewhat diffuse, setting forth of positions long familiar, and now regarded as fundamental. To many, even well-informed men, the volume will be especially useful as gathering up in an attractive manner much of recent advance in religious philosophy. To many whose minds are still balancing the issues here discussed it will give light on positions that are either vaguely held or vaguely repudiated, and enable them to draw the lines more definitely for themselves.

The volume has three books. The first sets forth "The Roman Catholic Dogma of Authority;" the second book deals with "The Protestant Dogmas of Authority;" and the third book has as its theme "The Religion of the Spirit." These are prefaced by an excellent Introduction on the main problem involved, and an Appendix gives a hint of the great amount of accurate, careful reading that enters into the treatise.

The style of the book is admirably caught in the translation. The author of this review read the book on its appearance in French, but has not the original at hand to make comparisons to test verbal fidelity. The impression of the whole, however, is one of great success in reproducing the lively, virile, clear style so often missed in speculative and theological books, particularly when in the German language.

The author plunges at once in his introductory remarks into the very heart of the controversy. He shows that the antagonisms between modern thought and traditional theology is a deeper one than any differences of outcome; that it is essentially a difference of method. The mind is autonomous, which does not mean that it is lawless, but does imply "that the consent of the mind to itself is the prime condition and foundation of all certitude." It is in the false method of traditional theology that its weakness lies, and for this reason "she is always in distress." Most inter-

<sup>1</sup> *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*. By Auguste Sabatier. Translated into English by Louise Seymour Houghton. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co. 410 pages.

estingly and truly does Sabatier then trace the social function of authority, and shows how the development of individuality "does not exhaust the phenomenon of consciousness," but that solidarity becomes increasingly "a moral ideal, a holy obligation." Authority has "its roots in the organic conditions of the life of the species, and its end is the formation of the individual." "Hence authority should labor to render itself useless." The outcome is the only possible one for anyone who has breathed the free air of the modern scientific method. "Authority, in its true conception, is and can be no other than relative." Sabatier goes on to apply this principle boldly and justly to theological thinking. "The ancient fathers wrested the Bible and the church from history, and, misapprehending their relative and conditioned character, erected them into immediate divine authorities and infallible oracles," whereas they should have been simply school-teachers to help the child to think for itself.

In this spirit of bold and fearless historical research Sabatier begins the study of the Roman Catholic dogma of authority. The three stages of the doctrine of infallibility—from the aristocratic republic of bishops, to a constitutional monarchy, and thence to the tyranny of an infallible pope—are set forth. The critique does not seem to the writer either extreme or unjust. The logical outcome of the action of the Vatican Council is a deified pope, but this position will be denied by "progressive" Catholics, and the infallible authority of the pope can be reduced to a simple "formal principle" to which traditional and personal experience gives content, as set forth in a recent article by a devout Roman Catholic in the *Hibbard Journal*. And, moreover, as infallible pastor the pope can only control the submission of the faithful.

In the discussion of the Catholic notion of the church Sabatier hardly makes sufficient allowances for the undoubted shiftings and confusions that mark its definition. The doctrine, as Sabatier sets it forth, may be found in germ from the beginning, but "Cyprian, Augustine, Bossuet, and Leo XIII" did not hold the same doctrine of the church. The initial confusion of the church with the reign of God is common to all, but their doctrine of the actual sacramental institution undergoes a considerable process of evolution. In the same way, while accepting in broad outline Sabatier's description of the rise of the Old Catholic church, the reviewer thinks Jesus himself had broader views of the meaning of his mission than those which it is now the fashion to attribute to him. We dare not interpret the teachings of Jesus exclusively in the light of eschatological teachings which bear on the face of them a later origin, and may mark the natural later interpretations of Jesus' death.

The account of the rise of the Græco-Roman church is substantially that familiar to every student of Hatch, Ritschl, and Harnack, but is marked by keen insight and some very just discrimination. The thoroughly Hebrew character of Paul is one of the sound positions which save Sabatier from some mistakes into which even Ritschl falls, even after he had formally rejected Baur. For the Tübingen school injected far too much Greek thought into Paul's writings, and in this Pfeleiderer, Holsten, and Schmiedel remain true to their intellectual ancestry.

In the discussion of the genesis of the Catholic theory of tradition the criticism of Sabatier is sharp and pungent. Even the ardent Protestant, however, may perhaps remember the tremendous task before the ecclesiastical organization. It was the only one with sufficient weight with the proletariat to save society, and to reorganize that society some sort of external unity seemed absolutely necessary. And this seemed so not only to fanatic bishops, but to such politicians as Constantine. Dogma was the fighting platform for a militant organization. The sad and disastrous outcome of this dogmatic development, the gradual separation of the hierarchy from the great priesthood of all believers, and the saddening monopoly by the few of what belonged to all, is admirably traced. Sabatier reminds us of the words spoken by Louiez, the Jesuit general: "Sheep are animals destitute of reason, and in consequence they can have no part in the government of the church." In a final word our author sums up the conflict:

The Roman Catholic church has thought to save her authority by investing it with the supernatural: she has killed it. A supernatural authority in the exterior order necessarily becomes first a political authority, and afterward an oppressive authority. . . . The forms of authority which are suited to humanity in its infancy and minority are exasperating to an adult and enlightened humanity. (P. 144.)

The second book is a most useful repetition of the grounds upon which Protestantism stands in refusing to identify the books of the Bible with the "Word of God." The only complaint against Professor Sabatier might be his too easy concession of the name Protestantism to the scholastic dogmatists of the seventeenth century. As Sabatier himself rightly remarks:

Then, having founded a new church, they were naturally left to give it, in the letter of Scripture, an external infallible authority, which should be in nothing inferior to that on which the rival church plumed herself. Thus their successors could say in their scholastic language that they had founded evangelical Protestantism upon two principles, one material, i. e., justification by faith; and one formal: the authority of the Scriptures. *In reality the early Reformers knew nothing of this dualism.*<sup>2</sup> (P. 164.)

<sup>2</sup> Italics ours.

As between the rival claims of Roman Catholicism and scholastic Protestantism, Sabatier quite correctly says that Catholicism is preferable (p. 187).

It was born and grew up in the very thick of the human conflict, rendering services to modern humanity, and bringing upon it evils and dangers alike extraordinary.

Compared with this historic machine, the Protestant authority is weak and unattractive. In fact, "the Protestant dogma of the infallibility of the Bible is not only inconceivable to thought—it is also useless in fact." (P. 187.)

The account of the rise of a new Protestantism of the spirit is very satisfactory, although of necessity it is a mere sketch. The services of Lessing may be somewhat overrated (pp. 206–8), but, on the whole, the narrative commands a general assent, and the appreciation of Schleiermacher is most just. Sabatier shows also how impossible it is to take refuge from the storms of historical criticism in the words of Jesus, for these very words are themselves the battle-ground of criticism. Sabatier then proceeds to examine the historic notion (pp. 235–40) and the religious notion (pp. 240–44) of the Bible, and finds a synthesis.

The letter of the Bible, then, is no longer the infallible rule of religious thought, the oracle of absolute and eternal truth. But none the less does the Bible continue to discharge a double and essential function in the life of churches, families, and individuals. It is no longer a code, but it remains a testimony; it is no longer a law, but it is a means of grace. It does not prescribe the scientific formulas of faith, but it does remain the historic fountain of Christian knowledge. (P. 247.)

In the third book, "The Religion of the Spirit," Sabatier is at his best. The first chapter is a dialogue with "Adelphi," who is not willingly convinced that authority and religion are not one and the same thing, or that one is not inseparably bound up with the other (pp. 255–83). The range of objection is the familiar plea that the modern view admits of unlimited subjectivity, and to this Sabatier replies by summing up briefly the arguments already advanced, closing with the words of Vinet:

Protestantism is for me only the starting-point; my religion is beyond. I may, as a Protestant, hold some Catholic opinions, and who knows that I do not? *That which I absolutely repudiate is authority.* (P. 283.)

The volume then traces the religion of the spirit to Jesus Christ.

Jesus was entirely aware of the revolution which he was setting in operation. Of all his utterances there is not one which is farther removed from the mode of thought of his time, and consequently more authentic, than this: "The rulers of

the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be with you; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant." (P. 284.)

And, on the same page, in reference to Matt. 23:8-12:

Jesus was not considering merely names and titles whose use is regulated by the sense in which they are employed. He was attacking and condemning the very principle of a religious hierarchy, which in the earlier religions had divided men into two classes, putting the consciences of one class under the tutelage of the other. What he proclaimed was fraternal equality, the spiritual independence of Christians, founded upon their filial relation to the heavenly father.

Most admirably does Sabatier describe the character of Jesus' teaching:

Jesus' method of teaching is then the opposite of that of the scribes, that is, the method of authority. It is rather a sort of divine maieutic, tending to give birth to a new life in the heart, to create the spiritual man in the carnal and animal man. (P. 287.)

Thus Jesus arouses to independent relations to God and to truth. The use Jesus makes of the Old Testament is always religious, and his freedom in the use of it is unbounded. "I say unto you" is directly opposed again and again to the express word of Scripture. Jesus "always wanted his disciples to understand what he was doing," and "the general principle which inspired his acts" (p. 291).

But this principle was drawn, not from heaven nor from any supernatural authority, but from the very depths of the human consciousness, so that, once it was proclaimed, conscience must recognize it as its own, and could not let it go.

In the same way the authority of Jesus is not based upon any metaphysical proposition, supported by any series of passages from canonical writings, but upon "the mysterious power which in his consciousness and by his word subjugates our souls and makes them his. This is the authority of God himself, it is "the spirit of truth, of love, and of holiness" (p. 293). For Sabatier this authority is sovereign and "absolute as that of God himself, in the domain of the religious experience" (p. 294). Nor is Sabatier afraid to carry out the full consequences of this conception:

It is a mistake to think that Jesus introduced a new doctrine of God, his essence and attributes, and of the intra-divine life. His notion of God is that of the Old Testament. (P. 297.)

So that "we are Christians just so far as the personal deity of Jesus, the sense of divine sonship, is reproduced in us" (p. 298). So, too, Sabatier asserts that "the dogma which made the Holy Spirit a metaphysical entity paralyzed and killed his dynamic influence in the Christian life" (p. 299).

The Spirit is the living Spirit of the Father abiding in us, and known by the fruits of moral sincerity and unreserved love for our fellow-men.

Thus we find traced to the pentecostal enthusiasm the beginnings of the religion of the Spirit, with its liberty and often fantastic excesses.

The church and theology have singularly fallen from this high position. Having reduced inspiration to the theory of intellectual infallibility, they have separated it from the Christian life. (P. 305.)

No chapter is finer or more really discriminating than that on "The Pauline Notion of Inspiration" (pp. 305-9). Short as the passage is, it is luminous and invaluable. Sabatier is on firm ground in his insistence on the Old Testament character of the Pauline doctrine of the Spirit.

It is not enough to represent the Spirit of God as coming to the help of man's spirit, supplying strength which he lacks, an associate or juxtaposed force, a supernatural auxiliary. Paul's thought has no room for such a moral and psychological dualism, although popular language easily admits it. (P. 307.)

The action of God's Spirit is thought of as essentially moral and regenerating, and is felt by all the faculties of soul and body, by the intelligence as much as by the will. Thus for Paul "inspiration is the essence of faith" (p. 308). And the state of inspiration is the common and permanent privilege of all believers. This inspiration is, however, love and holiness, and thus its reality can be judged by the outcome.

Less satisfactory is the exposition of the doctrine of the fourth gospel. It, the present reviewer thinks, must also be understood as the protest of Judaism against any metaphysical translation of the facts of an indwelling life. In this light it is clear, and there is no more difficulty with the apparent dualism of word and spirit than with that of Paul's body and spirit. Beautifully, however, does Sabatier dwell on the living character of the Johannine doctrine of the Spirit, but he seems either to miss, or perhaps did not accept, the character of the fourth gospel as a polemic against Gnosticism, much as the Priestly document (Gen. 1-2:3) is a polemic against mythological explanations of the world.

Thus we see the primitive church emerging as a religious democracy.

Monarchy and oligarchy with their gradations in rank have given place to a religious democracy, to the republic of fraternal souls, to the fundamental equality of citizens in the kingdom of God. (P. 313.)

The natural and the supernatural are no longer valid distinctions for the religion of the Spirit. All things are supernatural, and all the supernatural is natural. Thus the way is cleared for a really pious science, and a scientific piety—"inward piety the conscience of science, and science the legitimate expression of piety" (p. 318).

Again, our author is not only sound, but clear and convincing, when on the subject of liberty and determinism. "Everything that exists is determined, because everything that exists is conditioned" (p. 320). Liberty is a quality of spirit, and it is of the nature of spirit to determine itself according to the character of its being. This and this alone is liberty. "This is why law is liberty. In morals, its necessary content and its law is duty" (p. 320). To be free is to obey the law of one's being; servitude is just the opposite of "servitude to another." Bravely and logically this thought is carried out.

Thence it follows that it is impossible for a moral being, that is, a being who knows and consents to the law of his being, not to be in some measure religious, the religious sentiment being at bottom nothing other than the sentiment of the relationship between the moral being and the law that governs him. (P. 321.) Never was this relationship more perfectly expressed than in Jesus. "Never was will more submissive to the will of God, never was will more autonomous" (p. 323).

Equally clear and convincing is the discussion of salvation:

To believe in Christ, to be united to him by the influence of his word and work, is in fact nothing else than to believe the gospel, or, more properly speaking, to receive it as a living principle and realize it in ourselves. (P. 333.)

The only unpardonable sin is the persistent contempt and neglect of the witness of God in the consciousness. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, but one way to find Jesus essentially, even if misapprehending and even standing aloof from him, is to follow and to love truth as Jesus did. Yet we cannot afford to misapprehend or stand aloof from Christ. The heart of every Christian is bound to Jesus Christ, and must ever be so bound. We abide in him that we may find the truth and the Father.

In an important section our author points out, all too briefly, that as traditionalism threatens the Roman communion, a false and disintegrating individualism is at work in Protestantism. In a social Protestantism alone can we find real safety (pp. 339-41).

The closing chapters are mere outlines dealing with scientific theology, its method and spirit, and the proposed organization of the Christian doctrine, with an outline of the system.

Altogether it is a notable book, and of profound significance in its clear and comprehensive statement of modern Protestantism, as it is more and more coming to be understood. There is throughout the work a holy enthusiasm which is never content with any merely destructive analytical process. A great passionate life has gone out after God's truth, and the gleanings are a fair and really splendid harvest. The religion of the Spirit is



finding ever more articulate voices. Men are at last seeing that unity cannot be found in intellectual analyses of beliefs, however keen; nor can we ever again bow our heads, even nominally, to a central authority. Our unity must be in the divine organizing purpose of God, as that purpose is revealed in the historic Christ.

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### A HARMONY OF THE HEXATEUCH

Professor Kent's *Beginnings of Hebrew History*<sup>1</sup> is not a history or a critical introduction, as its name would seem to indicate, but is a harmony of the Hexateuch and the book of Judges. A work of this sort has been needed so long that it is a pity that it is not given a title which at once indicates its scope. Ever since the days of the Jewish rabbis the fact has been recognized that there are duplicate narratives in the Pentateuch, and various attempts have been made to bring these into harmony with one another. In 1554 Calvin published a harmony of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, in which he perceived that the history and the legislation of Deuteronomy are largely parallel to the history and the legislation of Exodus-Numbers, and placed the similar sections in juxtaposition. Modern criticism of the last century has demonstrated that the duplication of material in the Pentateuch is far more extensive than the older commentators supposed. Not merely does Deuteronomy represent a tradition independent of the middle books, but Genesis-Numbers is found to consist of a compilation of three parallel narratives—the Jehovist, the Elohist, and the Priestly Code. As a result of this compilation nearly every episode of early Hebrew history is narrated in two variant forms, and many episodes are narrated in three or even four forms. The same sort of composition is found to be characteristic of the other historical books, so that most of the incidents of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, are narrated in at least two different ways. Criticism has now advanced so far that it is able to recognize with reasonable certainty the limits of the several documents that enter into these historical books, and even where the sources cannot be named with certainty a duplication of material may frequently be detected. These facts make it desirable that we should have a book in which the parallel narratives of the Hexateuch and the other histories are

<sup>1</sup> *The Student's Old Testament: Vol. I, Narratives of the Beginnings of Hebrew History*, By Charles Foster Kent. New York: Scribner, 1904. xxxv+382 pages. \$2.75, net.